



GAMBLING

Recreation with Risks

For most seniors, gambling can be just another form of entertainment. However, a growing number of Florida's older adults are developing serious gambling problems at a time in life when significant loss from gambling can be difficult, if not impossible, to recover. Before gambling, it is important to know the risks involved and the warning signs of problem gambling.

Low Risk (Social) Gambling Guidelines

Know how much money you can afford to spend and lose gambling. Set a dollar limit and stick to it, expecting that any money spent gambling will most likely be lost.

Treat winning as a bonus, and losing as the cost of playing. Resist the urge to 'chase losses.'

Make it a rule to never gamble on credit. When you receive cash advances on credit cards to fund your gambling, you are gambling on credit.

Decide how much of your time you want to allow for gambling and leave when you reach your time limit whether you are winning or losing.

Do not substitute gambling for other worthwhile activities. Gambling should never be a substitute for time with family, friends, or other activities.

Use a 'buddy system' when gambling to ensure that your gambling stays in check.

Take breaks when gambling. Take advantage of the non-gambling activities that are available at many gambling establishments.

Know the 24-hour problem gambling HelpLine number, 888-ADMIT-IT (888-236-4848) to obtain help and resources if gambling causes problems for you or a friend.

Gambling is not the problem... Problem gambling is.

Warning Signs of Problem Gambling

- Spending more and more time thinking about gambling or ways to get money to place your next bet or pay off a gambling-related debt.
- Gambling to calm nerves, forget worries or to cope with depression.
- Needing to gamble larger and larger amounts of money to experience the same thrill.
- Withdrawing from family, friends, or regular activities due to increasing time spent gambling.
- Experiencing mood swings based on losing and winning.
- Neglecting personal needs or health.
- Experiencing anxiety or feeling let down after gambling excursions.
- Engaging in secrecy, avoidance, or lying when questioned about gambling behaviors.
- Using retirement funds or other assets to fund gambling.
- Pawning or selling personal items for gambling money or to pay debts because of gambling losses.
- Writing bad checks, or committing other crimes to get money for gambling.
- Experiencing increased anxiety, depression or self-destructive thoughts because of your gambling.

If you or anyone you know experiences any of the above warning signs, gambling may be a problem. The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling can help you find the services or supports needed to regain control of your life.

Help Starts Here

888-ADMIT-IT (888-236-4848)

24-Hour Confidential HelpLine

www.gamblinghelp.org